

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended). A tomographic image processing method for carrying out image processing on image data representing a chest tomographic image, the method comprising the ~~steps~~ step of:

carrying out dynamic range compression processing on the image data so as to compress a high density range of the chest tomographic image,

wherein the chest tomographic image includes a low density range that is unaffected by the compression of the high density range; and

carrying out tone conversion processing on the image data which has been processed by frequency enhancing processing.

2. (original): A tomographic image processing method as defined in Claim 1, the method further comprising the step of:

carrying out frequency enhancing processing on the image data having been subjected to the dynamic range compression processing.

3. (currently amended): A tomographic image processing apparatus for carrying out image processing on image data representing a chest tomographic image, the apparatus comprising:

dynamic range compression processing means for carrying out dynamic range compression processing on the image data in order to compress a high density range of the chest tomographic image,

wherein the chest tomographic image includes a low density range that is unaffected by the compression of the high density range;

and means for carrying out tone conversion processing on the image data which has been processed by frequency enhancing processing.

4. (original): A tomographic image processing apparatus as defined in Claim 3, further comprising:

frequency enhancing processing means for carrying out frequency enhancing processing on the image data that have been subjected to the dynamic range compression processing.

5. (currently amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute a tomographic image processing method for carrying out image processing on image data representing a chest tomographic image, the program comprising the procedure of:

carrying out dynamic range compression processing on the image data so as to compress a high density range of the chest tomographic image,

wherein the chest tomographic image includes a low density range that is unaffected by the compression of the high density range, and

carrying out tone conversion processing on the image data which has been processed by frequency enhancing processing.

6. (original): A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim 5, the program further comprising the procedure of:

carrying out frequency enhancing processing on the image data having been subjected to the dynamic range compression processing.

7. (previously presented): The tomographic image processing method as defined in claim 2, wherein the frequency enhancing processing is multiple frequency enhancing processing.

8. (previously presented): The tomographic image processing apparatus as defined in claim 4, wherein the frequency enhancing processing is multiple frequency enhancing processing.

9. (previously presented): The computer-readable recording medium as defined in claim 6, wherein the frequency enhancing processing is multiple frequency enhancing processing.

10. (previously presented): The tomographic image processing method as defined in Claim 1, wherein only the high density range is compressed.

11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended): The tomographic image processing method as defined in Claim 1 ~~11~~, wherein a degree of the dynamic range compression processing is changed in accordance with a degree of the tone conversion processing.